



Capitol Hill

NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN

STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

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February 18, 2010

Peter Hahn
Seattle Department of Transportation
P.O. Box 34996
Seattle, WA, 98124-4996

RE: Community Council recommendations for First Hill Streetcar

Dear Mr. Hahn:

The Capitol Hill Neighborhood Plan Stewardship Council joins the Broadway Improvement Association, Cal Anderson Park Alliance, Capitol Hill Chamber of Commerce, and Greater Seattle Business Association in supporting the Capitol Hill Community Council's three key recommendations as described in their January 25, 2010, memorandum regarding the Capitol Hill segment of the future First Hill Streetcar.

We reviewed and discussed a draft of the memorandum at our January meeting. Members in attendance unanimously agreed that these recommendations are congruent with the goals expressed in the Capitol Hill Urban Center Village Neighborhood Plan, and that our group should stand with the Community Council in issuing the recommendations to Seattle Department of Transportation.

Recommendation #1: Plan to extend to Aloha Street

Since tentative plans for the First Hill Streetcar were introduced to us several years ago, we have consistently advocated running the line at least as far north as Aloha Street.

Our neighborhood plan lists as a top priority the development of a Sound Transit rail station in our North Anchor District on Broadway between East Aloha Street and East Roy Street (Neighborhood Plan Approval and Adoption Matrix: A8, TR-2 and DD12, TR-25). Sound Transit has no plans for this northern station, so it is particularly important to provide transit connection from the future Capitol Hill rail station south of John Street to the North Anchor District.

The impetus for plans to build the First Hill Streetcar line was an effort to mitigate the removal of a rail station on First Hill from Sound Transit's plans. We hope that the line will also compensate for the lack of a North Capitol Hill station.

Recommendation #2: Keep the streetcar on Broadway north of Union Street

Alternatives would route the line on 11th Avenue, a quiet residential street, disrupting the character of the street and endangering pedestrians. The street is not presently used as a transit corridor, and our neighborhood plan does not call for making it such.

Recommendation #3: Reclaim the street

The proposals to which the Community Council has referred as "reclaiming the street" would dramatically improve the utility of Broadway for pedestrians and bicycles by calming traffic, providing narrower pedestrian crossings, and providing dedicated bicycle lanes separated from vehicular traffic by a parking lane. It would not affect buses, and would have only slight negative effect on cars' use of the street (the removal of left-turn lanes at some minor intersections and of the little-used center turn lane).

Our neighborhood plan calls for upgrading the Broadway streetscape from East Roy Street to Yesler way in order to both enhance the pedestrian-orientation of the corridor and strengthen its connections to other neighborhoods (C6, TR-8). The plan also calls for prioritization of pedestrians on all neighborhood streets, "balancing uses of the streets in the following order: 1) pedestrians, 2) bicycles, 3) buses, and 4) cars", (there were no plans for streetcars at the time, and we believe that the spirit of the plan includes them with buses in this prioritization), to realign curbs to increase the portion of street right-of-ways that is dedicated to pedestrians, and to decrease the length of pedestrian crossings (DD1, TR-14). It calls for upgrading pedestrian streetscapes and bicycle routes within one-half mile of each rail station (DD12, TR-25).

We appreciate the work the Community Council put into crafting these recommendations and we hope that SDOT will implement them.

Sincerely,

Phil Mocek
Chair, Capitol Hill Neighborhood Plan Stewardship Council

cc: Councilmember Sally J. Clark
Councilmember Jan Drago
Councilmember Jean Godden
Honorable Mike McGinn
Councilmember Richard J. McGiver
Capitol Hill Community Council